



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 5  
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD  
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

FD-305  
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REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF

B-19J

October 15, 2003

Kenneth Blodgett  
Surface Transportation Board  
1925 K Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20423

Re: Docket No. AB-847 (Sub-No. 2X), *Toledo, Peoria & Western Railway Corporation-Discontinuance Exemption* and  
Docket No. AB-855 (Sub-No. 1X), *A & R Line, Inc.-Abandonment Exemption*

Dear Mr. Blodgett:

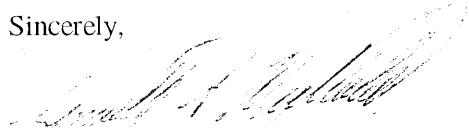
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Surface Transportation Board's (STB) Environmental Assessment dated September 29, 2003. Our comments in this letter are provided pursuant to NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

We appreciate the inclusion of items of concern as listed in our September 3, 2003 letter and look forward to discussing them with A & R Line, Inc. However, when reviewing the STB's Environmental Assessment, we became aware of several creek crossings within the 15.9 miles covered by the abandonment. To that end, the EPA would like to supply one additional environmental condition as follows:

- ◆ Bridge and culvert maintenance activities following abandonment. Ideally, culvert maintenance should be planned at least once per season to prevent blockage and damaging floods, while bridge maintenance activities should be planned yearly. Disposal of obstruction materials should take place away from the streambed, and the use of equipment in the streambed should be minimized and scheduled to coincide with periods of low or normal flow. Consideration of native flora to revegetate around culvert ends and bridge foundations to prevent erosion should be addressed. In particular, provision of maintenance activities for culverts and bridges should be provided until the property is sold, at which time maintenance activities will be transferred to the new owner via specific real estate provisions.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this document. Please send the STB's final decision to me when it is filed. Should you have any questions, please contact me or Kathleen Kowal of my office at 312/353-5206.

Sincerely,

  
Kenneth A. Westlake, Chief  
Environmental Planning and Evaluation Branch